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Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**RE: MM Docket No. 99-325**  
**Filing Online**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I write to commend and encourage the Federal Communications Commission to approve as policy the ability for radio stations to utilize the supplemental audio channel capacity (SAC) within digital audio broadcasting to develop more audio streams that promote diversity and expand public service.

Technical advances through initiatives such as National Public Radio's Tomorrow Radio Project have demonstrated the viability and capacity for radio stations to broadcast multiplexed digital programming. This is most desirable opportunity for us at Northeast Indiana Public Radio (NIPR) as we believe using SAC capacity fosters listener choice, facilitates community outreach, and forges maximum use of the FM band that is itself a finite audio resource.

Without SAC, public radio stations like ours are faced with the high costs and logistical challenges of adding new program services on the dial. Five years ago, NIPR sought to create a second program service and found that the only open NCE channels

serving Fort Wayne were translator frequencies. Further investigation identified an available full service station north of the city but whose signal could be brought back into town on the translator. We presently microwave programming for this station north so it can be heard in Fort Wayne, and even then, not all that well due to the limitations of translator stations. Clearly, to have the ability to use SAC technology in conjunction with our main channel would allow this second service to reach more listeners and at less cost.

Within NIPR's second service is local programming focused on northeast Indiana's growing Hispanic population. NIPR is presently working with United Hispanic-Americans, Inc. on this weekly bilingual program of area news and music. Implementing multiplexed digital programming would enhance our efforts to provide a very cost-effective means of expand the quality and quantity of such local, diverse programming thereby improving our overall offerings to the community we serve.

Fort Wayne is the second largest city in Indiana and the northeast region of the state continues to grow with more opportunities for radio service than there is time in the day or space on the dial. The prospect of digital broadcasting is an exciting one in its ability to present public radio's music formats of classical and jazz in a dynamic way. However, the decisive factor for my station is the capability to serve supplemental audio programming and allow more outlets and opportunities for us to fulfill our public service mission and enables us to expand programming to meet listener needs that are either underserved or not served at all.

I urge the FCC to affirm its vision of expanded audio service through the adoption of DAB service rules that encourage more audio streams and optimize station stewardship of the public's airwaves, and, in the creation of such a policy, eliminate the need for stations to obtain experimental authority to broadcast multiplexed digital programming. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bruce R. Haines  
General Manager  
Northeast Indiana Public Radio, Inc.